

# STATE OF ALASKA

## DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE

Alaska Mental Health  
Trust Authority

*MIKE DUNLEAVY, GOVERNOR*

## Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman

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To: Senate Labor and Commerce

The Alaska Office of the State Long Term Care Ombudsman program is pleased to offer support for *Senate Bill (SB) 235*—“An Act relating to training programs for certified nurse aides”. The mission of the LTC Ombudsman program is to provide resident-centered advocacy designed to protect the rights, health, safety and welfare of Alaskans living in long term care settings.

We advocate to improve the quality of life and care for all seniors.

One of the top five complaints received in our Office consistently is the quality of care for seniors living in long-term care facilities. Individuals living with dementia have individual needs, which can range from a different way of expressing themselves (communication) to dementia-related behavioral and other challenges. Dementia training, education and awareness may aid in a better-quality of care for seniors living with dementia because staff become knowledgeable about the specific needs of people with dementia. Understanding the specific types of dementia may also help caregivers better support the individual living with dementia.

The Alaska Office of the State Long Term Care Ombudsman urges the Alaska State Legislature to support *SB 235* to help ensure that Alaska’s CNAs are trained in dementia care. Staff training within care settings is potentially valuable in improving the well-being and quality care of residents in long term care settings.

Thank you for your work on this bill.

Sincerely,

**Stephanie Wheeler**

Stephanie Wheeler, PhD

State of Alaska, Long-Term Ombudsman Program